

September 21, 2016

Rhode Island Commerce Corporation

ADDENDUM NO. 002

Questions & Answers

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
Visit Rhode Island Website Design and Development

The Rhode Island Commerce Corporation (Corporation) is requesting proposals from a firm to develop and design a new destination website for Rhode Island under the same domain, www.VisitRhodeIsland.com. Services will include website redesign, website production, ongoing website support, and search engine optimization, as well as developing a strategic approach to organizing content that inspires, informs, and drives action.

Question #1: How many content authors will be accessing the CMS system? How often per day, week or month will these users be updating content?

Answer #1: There could be as many as seven content authors accessing the CMS system, in addition to partners who should be able to submit and update their own events. Content will be updated as necessary.

Question #2: Will the content authors be located in the same place?

Answer #2: Not necessarily; remote access is required.

Question #3: Will all content authors have access to the entire site? Or will some content authors only have access to specific sites or specific pages within these sites?

Answer #3: All content authors will most likely have access to the entire site, but we would like the option to restrict access if deemed necessary.

Question #4: Do you have roles for content authors today? Creators, editors, approvals, etc?

Answer #4: No, currently, our website is mostly managed by one in-house employee with the support of our IT vendor. Other team members and our agency of record have access should widespread support be required.

Question #5: What is your volume of traffic today? Monthly? Yearly?

Answer #5:

- Today - 1,225 sessions
- August - 177,525 sessions
- 2016 YTD - 811,768 sessions
- 2015 - 937,965

Question #6: Has a budget been defined that you must stay within? What is that budgetary allotment?

Answer #6: Please refer to the answer to question #13 from the pre-bid conference in addendum #1. Current allotted budget is between \$200-250k.

Question #7: Does RICC have a preference towards a particular CMS at this time?

Answer #7: Please refer to the answer to questions #10 and #16 from the pre-bid conference in addendum #1.

Question #8: What percentage of the existing content that will need to be migrated to the new website?

Answer #8: Almost all of the content will need to be migrated, perhaps with a few exceptions, in a new format. The team at the Commerce Corporation will be responsible for identifying content to be migrated.

Question #9: Who will be managing this content on going? Is all of the content written by in-house staff, or are external contributors ever responsible for providing content (excluding blog – We know you have guest contributors)?

Answer #9: Content will be managed by the Commerce Corporation team, with support from our IT vendor and agency of record. There may continue to be guest contributors to the blog, and anyone should be able to submit and update events on the website.

Question #10: Who will be writing new copy for the website?

Answer #10: The Commerce Corporation will handle copy writing.

Question #11: How many people are involved in the editorial cycle and what roles do those people play? Writer, editor, copy editor, graphics creator, legal approval, manager approval, etc.?

Answer #11: Ten senior- to mid-level, internal, staff members are involved in the editorial cycle, end-to-end. Vendor is responsible for graphics under the direction of in-house Commerce staff.

Question #12: Will there be a web publishing model or process of approving content before it is displayed on the site? Can you describe this process?

Answer #12: Yes, details will be determined in partnership with the chosen vendor based on industry best practices.

Question #13: Is there any content that is automatically added to your site (such as a live news feed or “harvested” content)?

Answer #13: We currently pull several third-party feeds into our site, such as *Rhode Island Monthly*. People can also submit events on the site to be included in the event calendar.

Question #14: Do you have any videos or heavy media that will take up data space or effect download performance? (Large files, video, animation, etc.) How many of these types of files do you have today? Will you see large files increasing greatly in the future?

Answer #14: Currently, there are not many large files, but we would like the capability to use more video and imagery going forward.

Question #15: Will this site need to be multi-lingual now or in the anticipated future? If so, how many languages will be required?

Answer #15: We may decide to implement this option — languages to be determined. A landing page will need to be translated into at least four languages (Chinese, German, French, Spanish).

Question #16: What is the current process for archiving or removing content from the site for any reason?

Answer #16: Regular audits occur, and outdated content is deactivated. We will be looking to automate this process as much as possible going forward.

Question #17: Has the new information architecture – the basic site map and content for the new site structure been decided?

Answer #17: No, we will be looking for the chosen vendor to assist in this process and provide options based on industry best practices.

Question #18: Has a full audit been performed on the current content to determine what needs to be moved to the new system? Will some content be dropped from the site?

Answer #18: The site has been recently audited, but another audit will occur to determine if any content should not be migrated to the new site.

Question #19: Does the content have any tagging today? How is content tagged? What fields are tagged (e.g., company, topic, industry) and what terms are used in each category? How is the taxonomy managed right now?

Answer #19: The current site does not use sufficient tagging or SEO practices. We will be looking to robustly implement this into our new website with the help of the chosen vendor.

Question #20: Who will be approving the design? How many people will be involved?

Answer #20: Please refer to the answer to question #11.

Question #21: Will they be using existing photography or will new photos need to be taken or procured?

Answer #21: Most likely, both. The Commerce Corporation will be responsible for providing all photography.

Question #22: If we are using existing photography – do have the source files, so we may re-size them to fit a new design layout?

Answer #22: For most existing photography that will be used, yes.

Question #23: Are there specific websites that RICC considers to be well designed and looks to as a source for inspiration?

Answer #23: Yes, the state destination websites for Maine, New Mexico and Connecticut.

Question #24: How many resources will need to be trained and to what level?

Answer #24: Please refer to the answer to question #17 from the pre-bid conference in addendum #1. Most members of our team (four) should be trained to make most anticipated updates to the website.

Question #25: Can this be a train the trainer session or will we need to have multiple training sessions?

Answer #25: We do not have an in-house trainer, so sessions will be required to train the team. Every effort will be made to minimize the number of training sessions required, but multiples may be needed.

Question #26: Are all the trainees located in one location or off-site?

Answer #26: They are located on-site.

Question #27: Do you require developer trainer on the new CMS system or only content editing training?

Answer #27: Most likely content-editing and minor development.

Question #28: Will the new itinerary planner function the same as the existing TRIP Planner? What new functionality will need to be added that does not exist today?

Answer #28: We will look to our chosen vendor for guidance based on industry best practices — both in terms of website development/functionality and other well-performing tourism websites.

Question #29: What functionality exists behind the password protected portion of the site as it pertains to business owners and their listings? What information to business owners have access

to and what do they have the ability to change within their own list? Please include as much detail about this functionality as possible.

Answer #29: The password-protected section of the website provides the contributor with a form to either submit or update their event, which must be approved and published by in-house Commerce staff.

Question #30: Aside from social media feeds, what other integration points exist between the website and 3rd party providers? Please provide as much information as possible around the integrations required and any API documentation that is available.

Answer #30: All feeds are visible on www.visitrhodeisland.com.

Question #31: Does your organization already have a working relationship with an advertising or marketing agency capable of fulfilling this scope of services? If yes, have you been satisfied by the work of that agency, and do you expect that agency will put forth a response to your RFP?

Answer #31: No.

Question #32: Have you already set a ballpark budget for the project? If so, can you share that with us?

Answer #32: Please refer to the answer to question #6.

Question #33: What was the last budgeted amount for the current website?

Answer #33: Not applicable.

Question #34: Is it required for an in person oral presentation from finalists or is a GoTo Screen share meeting acceptable?

Answer #34: An in-person presentation is required as outlined in the RFP.

Question #35: Whether companies from Outside USA can apply for this? (like,from India or Canada)

Answer #35: Yes, all proposals submitted according to the requirements outlined in the RFP will be considered. The selected vendor will need to be properly registered to do business in Rhode Island.

Question #36: Whether we need to come over there for meetings?

Answer #36: Yes.

Question #37: Can we perform the tasks (related to RFP) outside USA? (like, from India or Canada)

Answer #37: This could be investigated, but at some point, members of the selected team will need to be available for onsite meetings.

Question #38: Can we submit the proposals via email?

Answer #38: No, proposals must be received per the instructions outlined in the RFP.

Question #39: Can you provide site traffic info (sessions, pageviews, etc)?

Answer #39: Please see response to question #5.

Question #40: What is the current CMS?

Answer #40: The current CMS was built in house and is not an open-source solution. Please refer to the answer to question #4 from the pre-bid conference in addendum #1.

Question #41: What is the current Database(s) for business listings, offers, etc.?

Answer #41: It is built into the CMS. Please refer to the answer to question #4 from the pre-bid conference in addendum #1.

Question #42: Where are your consumer contacts / visitor inquiries managed currently?

Answer #42: In house.

Question #43: What is your current Email marketing platform?

Answer #43: Constant Contact.

Question #44: Will there be a dial-in option for the pre-bid conference?

Answer #44: No, the questions and answers from the pre-bid conference can be viewed in addendum #1.

Question #45: What was the cost last year?

Answer #45: Not applicable.

Question #46: Who was the contractor?

Answer #46: Not applicable.

Question #47: Where can I get a copy of the contract?

Answer #47: Not applicable.

Question #48: What was the bid tabulation for last year?

Answer #48: Not applicable.

Question #49: Is there a local vendor preference?

Answer #49: No, there is no vendor preference outside the scope of the RFP.

Question #50: Is there any bonding required?

Answer #50: Bond requirements are outlined within the RFP.

Question #51: You ask for a launch in Q1, if we gave you a schedule that provided a site by Mid Q2 would that be a deal breaker?

Answer #51: We are prioritizing a Q1 launch.

Question #52: If Q1 is required, would you consider a phased approach? Where we launched something in Q1 and more in Q2?

Answer #52: Please refer to the answer to question #51.

Question #53: We would like to propose Drupal 8 as the CMS, is this acceptable? Do you need a specific technology stack?

Answer #53: We would need more information on the features, benefits and drawbacks of this CMS before making that decision. We are seeking a presentation of the options available as well as a vendor recommendation.

Question #54: At the pre-bid conference it was stated that a realistic project estimate would be difficult to develop at this early stage so a schedule of hourly rates for the team working on the project would suffice, however the RFP lists “budget approach” as a criteria on page 10 and “detailed budget” on page 13. Can you please clarify?

Answer #54: Please refer to the answer to question #6.

Question #55: Can you share the 12-month budget for the project?

Answer #55: Please refer to the answer to question #6.

Question #56: A project like this, including bespoke development, will run in the \$250K to \$320K range, over the first year - is this a deal breaker?

Answer #56: No. Please refer to the answer to question #6.

Question #57: Can you identify and rank the top three KPIs for this project?

Answer #57: Site visits, duration of time spent on the site and percentage of new visitors.

Question #58: Can you confirm that capturing visitor contact info for remarketing purposes is a key function of the site?

Answer #58: Yes.

Question #59: Do you require functionality to track when site visitors consequently book hotel rooms or restaurant reservations?

Answer #59: Yes, if possible.

Question #60: Is a CRM platform set-up, subscription and training considered an integral part of this RFP?

Answer #60: Yes.

Question #61: Did the Commerce Corporation contact and send RFPs to the firms that produced the tourism sites you mentioned that you liked for the states of New Mexico, Maine and Connecticut? If so, do they plan to respond to this RFP?

Answer #61: No.

Question #62: On page 13, the third item under Administrative Proposal Elements, please clarify what you mean by “a listing of all current and on-going contracts.”

Answer #62: We want a list of your current and on-going clients.

Question #63: Does the Corporation have a preference regarding specific CMS/platform technologies?

Answer #63: Please refer to the answer to questions #10 and #16 from the pre-bid conference in addendum #1.

Question #64: What CMS does the current VisitRhodelsland.com use, if any?

Answer #64: Please refer to the answer to question #40.

Question #65: Is there currently an incumbent firm providing the Corporation with Website Design/Development/Maintenance services? If so, will the incumbent be bidding on this project, and can you release the firm’s name?

Answer #65: We have a vendor under contract for general IT support for the corporation, including some website maintenance and support. We do not know at this time if they will be bidding on this project.

Question #66: Does the Corporation expect the awarded firm to spend a significant amount of time on-site? Or can most of the work be done off-site/remotely?

Answer #66: Most of the work can be done remotely; however, some in-person, on-site meetings will most likely be requested of the chosen vendor.

Question #67: Is there an estimated budget range for this project? Or do you have any information regarding previous budgets for similar projects?

Answer #67: Please refer to the answer to question #6.

Question #68: What has the Corporation spent annually in recent years for the maintenance, support and hosting of its current website?

Answer #68: Not applicable.

Question #69: What % of your visitors are in-state? Out of state? International?

Answer #69: In August 2016, 18.5% of website visitors were from Rhode Island, 78% from other U.S. states, approximately 3.5% from non-U.S. countries.

Question #70: What competitive tourism sites are viewed as successful and ones to emulate?

Answer #70: Please refer to the answer to question #23.

Question #71: Please provide details of traffic on the VisitRhodeIsland.com site? Average daily, monthly, and yearly volumes

Answer #71: Please refer to the answer to question #5.

Question #72: Who are your primary competitors?

Answer #72: The other Northeast states.

Question #73: How does seasonality affect your content, content marketing and visitor experience? How is this planned and implemented?

Answer #73: The website should reflect the current season as well as the upcoming tourist season that we are marketing.

Question #74: Are you currently using an analytics solution? If so, please provide details.

Answer #74: Yes, Google Analytics.

Question #75: What web tools do you use today? Please include details of any CMS or designer/developer tools do you currently use? Which do you like, dislike, or are indifferent?

Answer #75: The current CMS was built in house and is not an open-source solution. Please refer to the answer to question #4 from the pre-bid conference in addendum #1.

Question #76: What PII data do you currently store or do you anticipate collecting and storing in the future?

Answer #76: We do not collect any PII data. Going forward, we would like to learn as much as we can about our customer and will look for vendor recommendations to accomplish that goal.

Question #77: Do you expect to have a login that is optional or required?

Answer #77: Back-end access must require a log-in.

Question #78: Do you share or otherwise monetize the visitor data that you collect?

Answer #78: We do not monetize our data. It is shared only to report on performance to our stakeholders.

Question #79: Is all visitor data, including any analytics data collected, considered private and confidential? Do you have a privacy statement or standard that you can share?

Answer #79: All of our documents and records are subject to the state's Access to Public Records Act.

Question #80: Do you recognize and treat returning visitors differently? Please explain.

Answer #80: Currently, no. Going forward, we would like to learn as much as we can about our customer and will look for vendor recommendations to accomplish that goal.

Question #81: Do you target and re-target visitors? Please explain?

Answer #81: The Commerce team uses best practices to identify key consumer markets and integrates tactics across social and digital marketing platforms and traditional PR.

Question #82: Page 5 of the RFP states: "Companies must demonstrate a proven history of strategic and effective travel and tourism-related website development. Companies must also have experience integrating best-of-breed technologies as part of a stack that will support online listening, audience development, email marketing, content management and site analytics." Would the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation consider procuring a Best of Breed platform that meets all requirements, is fully integrated and most of the components are industry leading, but one or two components of the platform is one of the top 2 or 3 solutions in its respective space?

Answer #82: Yes, this would be considered in partnership with our chosen vendor based on industry best practices.

Question #83: Page 6 of the RFP mentions the requirement for a CMS that [...] allows updates to easily be made by the site administrator. Is there only one person in this role, or are there multiple individuals who could/will fulfill this role?

Answer #83: This role is, and probably will remain, fulfilled by multiple people, with one primary administrator.

Question #84: Page 9 of the RFP states the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation will “Deliver content for integration into new site.” In what format will the content be provided?

Answer #84: We will work with the selected vendor to determine the best format and method of transfer.

Question #85: As stated in the RFP, Rhode Island’s tourism industry is estimated at \$2.38 billion. What tourism growth objectives have been identified and what key role does www.VisitRhodeIsland.com play in achieving that objective? How is that measured?

Answer #85: To be determined based on industry best practices.

Question #86: Page 6 of the RFP states the desire to “create a delightful and uncomplicated experience.” What specific aspects of the current site are considered complicated and therefore require redesign?

Answer #86: Please refer to the answer to question #10 from the pre-bid conference in addendum #1.

Question #87: Page 6 of the RFP discusses the need for “development of personas for target audience segments and use these personas to further define site experiences and desired content”. Are personas or segments utilized today? If so, what are the personas and segments? Is there a desire to dynamically provide different experiences to visitors depending on the segment and/or personas?

Answer #87: There are no current personas or segments identified. We will look to our chosen vendor for a recommendation in this area.

Question #88: Is there a need to support high-resolution media (images and video). Is a centralized repository (or DAM) utilized today? How much digital media storage is utilized today and what is projected?

Answer #88: Absolutely, both high-resolution still photography/graphics and video will need to be implemented. Our current repository solution is inadequate, and we will be looking to our chosen vendor for a solution to this challenge.

Question #89: Page 7 of the RFP discusses a portal for use by industry partners and event producers to supply and update. How is that accomplished today? Do partners pay to have content posted on your web site?

Answer #89: Please refer to the answer to question #8 from the pre-bid conference in addendum #1. No one pays to have content listed on our site; listings are free of charge.

Question #90: How many partners do you currently have? Are partners managed through a CRM tool?

Answer #90: The site currently consists of approximately 1,100 industry partners. They are managed by Commerce staff.

Question #91: Is there a requirement for the interactive destination maps to display listings from partners?

Answer #91: We would entertain that suggestion and are looking for recommendations from our selected vendor.

Question #92: How do you determine the page positioning of a listing? Is there preferential listing positioning? For example, when searching for a hotel the "All Seasons Inn and Suites" always appears in the upper left-hand side. Is this by design?

Answer #92: Current listings are by region per volume then alphabetical within region. We will look to our chosen vendor for best practices in the redesign.

Question #93: What level of ADA compliance is desired? WCAG 2.0?

Answer #93: We will defer to our selected vendor for a recommendation based on industry standards.

Question #94: Is the digital itinerary builder requirement expected to be a custom build or an integration with a 3rd party? Is the current TRIP capability acceptable or is there a desire to replace this?

Answer #94: Please refer to the answer to question #9 from the pre-bid conference in addendum #1.

Question #95: What % of your visits are through a mobile device compared to desktop? How is this trending?

Answer #95: In August 2016, 53.7% of visits were through mobile, 34% from a desktop, 12.3% from a tablet.

Question #96: For your mobile visitors do you desire to provide geo-location capability and mapping?

Answer #96: Yes.

Question #97: Is there a need to provide site-wide alerts or messages for critical situations to include weather situations, amber alerts, and other public broadcasting scenarios?

Answer #97: This can be included in your proposal recommendations.

Question #98: Is there a need to process credit card transactions?

Answer #98: No.

Question #99: How would you describe the adoption of the coupon program? Is the current coupon program successful?

Answer #99: The current coupon program is not being used at this time.

Question #100: When a visitor comes to your site, what information do you typically have about that visitor? What information would you like to have that you currently do not have?

Answer #100: Please refer to the answer to question #10 from the pre-bid conference in addendum #1.

Question #101: How many internal content authors would work with the CMS?

Answer #101: Please refer to the answer to question #1.

Question #102: What techniques does the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation employ to optimize user experiences?

Answer #102: Our current site does not provide an optimized experience. We will be looking to our chosen vendor to recommend a solution to this challenge.

Question #103: Is A/B/n and/or multivariate testing part of this strategy? If yes, is this limited to web properties, or does it include email and paid media?

Answer #103: We will require extensive testing of the website prior to the main launch. We are looking to our selected vendor to provide best practices.

Question #104: Does the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation engage in direct mail campaigns, or have the desire to do so?

Answer #104: Yes, to both questions.

Question #105: Does the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation engage in SMS campaigns, or have the desire to do so?

Answer #105: Not currently, but this is something we would like to explore.

Question #106: Does the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation desire the ability to leverage offline data for the purposes of segmentation? If yes, please describe.

Answer #106: Yes, we would like to explore this option.

Question #107: Does the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation currently leverage 2nd and 3rd party data for segmentation and targeting? If yes, please describe. If no, is this a desired capability?

Answer #107: Not currently, but this is a capability we would like to explore.

Question #108: Do you utilize success metrics today, and what benefits are there to you or your partners if those success metrics are achieved? Please explain.

Answer #108: Metrics are used today for measurement of growth and are imperative to the corporation as we advocate for funding.

Question #109: Related to the success metrics question above, what steps are taken if such success metrics are not achieved? How can you adjust and adapt?

Answer #109: Strategy and tactics are adjusted based on learnings from metrics captured.

Question #110: What level of availability must your site achieve today? 99.99%? 99.5%? What are the consequences of site unavailability or site performance degradation?

Answer #110: We must strive for the highest possible percentage of availability. Site degradation or outage is a serious issue that must be minimized.

Question #111: Has the Rhode Island Commerce Corporation identified a budget for this project? If so, please provide details.

Answer #111: Please refer to the answer to question #6.

***End of Addendum ***